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ABSTRACT

Reading teachers need to provide for individual differences so that each pupil might attain optimally. Methods of teaching reading should be varied and thus reflect diverse philosophies of instruction. These philosophies should be analyzed and used to guide optimal pupil achievement. A philosophy of phoneme/grapheme relationships should be emphasized as needed to guide learners to identify unknown words. A patterns philosophy should be emphasized for learners who might benefit from structure and order in studying words, sentences, and paragraphs. A library book's philosophy should be utilized where learners desire holism and benefit from reading entire stories and poems. Diacritical marking systems philosophies may be emphasized in initial reading instruction for those who need guidance to deal with irregular spelling of words, such as irregularity in silent letters, combinations of letters making a single sound, and/or long vowel sounds. The use of special alphabet systems, such as the Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA), in teaching reading is not recommended. Basal readers should be used to provide for the needs and interests of individual pupils, rather than to teach all students. (SR)

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PHILOSOPHY OF READING INSTRUCTION

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Reading teachers need to provide for individual differences so that each pupil might attain more optimally. Too frequently, a single approach is utilized. However, many approaches of reading instruction are available. The learner and the philosophy utilized to teach reading must be one and not separate entities. Thus, the pupils should attend, be observant of new words introduced, as well as understand subject matter read.

Quality literature should also be in evidence. The pupil then experiences characterization, setting, plot, irony, satire, and point of view, as readiness permits.

Methods of teaching reading should be varied and thus reflect diverse philosophies of instruction.

Philosophy of Phoneme/Grapheme Relationships

Selected reading specialists and teachers emphasize teaching reading emphasizing strong sound/symbol relationships. S--R theory of learning is heavily emphasized here. The stimulus S is presented with different individual letters or letters within a word. Thus, the stimulus or S might be a single letter such as R. The learner then associates the correct sound with the letter R. Or, in a word such as "cat," each letter makes a separate sound (grapheme, phoneme relationship). Reinforcement is in evidence if a reward (praise,

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stickers and inexpensive prizes) is presented for the pupil making a correct response in correctly associating a sound with a symbol.

Separate sounds make for individual words, whereas sequential words make for sentences and paragraphs.

A part to whole philosophy of teaching is involved in a thoroughly developed program of phonics instruction. Specific objectives then in phonics move from teaching relationships between individual and collective letters with sounds to increased holism, such as pupils recognizing words in isolation as well as in context.

Further implications in the philosophy of phonetic approaches in the teaching of reading are

1. the English language is highly phonetic between grapheme/phoneme relationships.

2. skill in associating graphemes/phonemes transfers well to identifying these same elements in words and larger thought units.

3. essential subject matter has been identified for all pupils to achieve to be successful readers.

4. phonics has a long history and tradition in reading instruction.

5. a definite sequence is involved in the teaching of reading, such as grapheme/phoneme relationship, whole words, sentences, and larger units of discourse.

A philosophy of teaching phonics within the reading curriculum should be emphasized with the following pupils:

1. those who can benefit from hearing likenesses/differences in sounds and applying these learnings in functional situations.

2. those who need assistance in identifying an unknown word and the sound/symbol relationships involved are consistent.

3. those who achieve in phonetic analysis rather than to those who are forced to acquire phonics skills.

4. those who possess an adequate attention span to view graphemes and hear the related phonemes.

5. those who possess adequate readiness to benefit from phonics instruction.

The writer recommends that phonics instruction be blended into a holistic approach whereby the focal point is on ideas, subject matter and content contained in a story or library book.

Philosophy of Patterns in Teaching Reading

A patterns approach might appear to be related to phonics but is in reality quite different. Patterns might involve word families be initially emphasized in teaching reading to young children. Thus, a consistent pattern such as the following might be appropriate for early primary grade pupils: ban, can, fan, man, pan, ran, tan, and van.

Sentences may be composed containing these previously listed words. A sentence may then be written for young children such as the following: man can fan tan van. As the child matures in reading abilities, an increased number of irregularly spelled words may be emphasized. More toward the end of the elementary years, pupils may master words that have such irregularities as the "ough" ending. These words include through, though, bough, and cough. Regularly and irregularly spelled words are sequenced into the kindergarten - grade six reading program as readiness of pupils permits.

Patterns of sentences are also studied by pupils in an appropriate sequence. These patterns include

1. subject - predicate.
2. subject - predicate - direct object.
3. subject - predicate - indirect object - direct object.
4. subject - linking verb - predicate adjective.
5. subject - linking verb - predicate noun.

Furthermore patterns exist in expanding or enlarging sentences. Four procedures are available - using modifiers, appositives, compounding, and subordinate clauses.

Proper intonation is necessary in reading. Patterns approaches then emphasize the concepts of stress, pitch, and juncture. Stress with its emphasis upon saying an individual word in a sentence louder or softer as well as pitch with individual words being pitched higher or

lower are vital concepts in the patterns philosophy of reading instruction. Juncture stresses appropriate pauses within a word (I scream vs. ice cream) to make for clarity in oral communication. Furthermore, pauses of adequate duration need to separate one word from other sequential words.

A philosophy of utilizing a patterns school of thought in teaching reading might be utilized with the following pupils:

1. those whose learning style stresses perceiving continuous order in syntax (word order in sentences, such as the subject-predicate and other patterns of sentences).

2. those who are aided in identifying unknown words with the utilization of word families (change the letter "b" in ban to a "t" with the end result being "tan."

3. those who do not succeed using other philosophies of reading instruction.

4. those who predict well what follows next in content or subject matter read.

5. those who may make continuous progress in reading as a result of being taught sentence patterns and means of expanding or enlarging sentences.

The writer recommends that reading teachers relate a patterns philosophy, if utilized, with the reading of meaningful prose and poetry on the readiness level of involved pupils.

Philosophy of Reading Library Books

Utilization of library books might well provide the entire scope and sequence of the reading program. Ideally, each learner should choose his/her own books to read. A variety of topics and titles of books should be in the offing to meet pupils' needs and interests. The reading teacher needs to guide a student to select a book to read if the latter is unable to do so.

After the pupil has completed reading a library book, he/she may have a conference with the teacher to determine ways of revealing comprehension and appreciation. A discussion of content read can be an appropriate way to indicate how well the pupil understood what was read. The pupil might also indicate comprehension of content read through other approaches such as

1. drawing a related picture of inherent subject matter.
2. dramatizing selected concepts and generalizations.
3. outlining sections of the library book.
4. describing creatively that which might follow subject matter read in the library book.
5. telling orally about the plot, characters, and setting of the story.

A library book's philosophy of reading instruction might be useful for the following pupils:

1. those who perceive holism in content read. The entire story or book is vital rather than analyzing words into phonetic elements or syllables.

2. those who read proficiently and comprehend content well. Analyization skills are then not needed.

3. those who reveal a learning style which reflects a gestalt (holism) psychology of learning rather than an S-R theory (part to whole) approach.

4. those who perceive sequential relationships among words, sentences, paragraphs, poetry, and prose.

5. those who reveal objective achievement in library books read whereby word recognition skills may be minimized or eliminated.

The writer recommends a library book philosophy in teaching reading. Comprehension of subject matter read is the ultimate goal of reading instruction. Phonics and other word recognition skills should be taught, as needed for each student, to increase the acquisition of ideas in reading diverse types of literature.

Diacritical Marking Philosophies of Reading Instruction

Selected reading specialists advocate utilizing diacritical markings over specific words to guide young and disabled readers to

identify words. A few examples will be given of diacritical markings which any reading teacher can use in the curriculum. These are

1. to write a slash mark over silent letters within subject matter to be read, e.g. rod$\not{e}$, re$\not{a}$d, and writ$\not{e}$.

2. to place a bar over any long vowel sound, e.g. m$\bar{a}$ke, b$\bar{a}$by, and $\bar{a}$id.

3. to place a bar over two letters making one sound, e.g. $\overline{ch}$air, $\overline{sh}$ine, and $\overline{th}$is.

4. to place a bar under two letters, regardless of spelling, which always makes the same sound, e.g. fu$\underline{r}$, fi$\underline{r}$, and transf$\underline{er}$. The underlined parts always make the "er" ending sound.

5. to place a dot above each schwa sound, regardless of its spelling, e.g. $\dot{a}$bove, $\dot{a}$lone, and $\dot{a}$mong.

The writer approves of diacritical markings over selected letters if it assists pupils to perceive a stronger relationship between graphemes/phonemes. These markings should be omitted as soon as possible to develop independent readers seeking holistic content.

Philosophy of Special Alphabetic Systems

The Intitial Teaching Alphabet (ITA) emphasizes selected symbols which would be consistent with individual related sounds. ITA is not a popular philosophy of teaching reading. It did make some inroads during

the middle 1960's to the middle 1970's. Many symbols in ITA are the same as in traditional orthography (TO). Thus, the follow letters are the same in ITA and TO: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, u, v, w, y, and z. The letters Q and X do not exist in ITA. Additional letters added to ITA are the long vowel sounds, e.g. aae, eee, iee, oee, and uee. The "e" attached to each vowel letter of TO makes for a long vowel sound in ITA, e.g. taek, roed, ried, reed, vue. ITA emphasizes one symbol per sound. Upper and lower case letters are written the same, except for the former being a little taller than the latter. No silent letters exist in the 44 symbols used by ITA. An example of a new symbol used by ITA is (a) This symbol is a grapheme, like others, is always consistent with the sound made. The (a) symbol is then placed inside of the parenthesis of each of the following: t(o), t(wo), t(oo), thr(ough), r(heu)matism, t(u)ne, and bl(ue). There are seventeen different ways in TO to spell the (a) sound.

Special alphabet systems, such as ITA, emphasize

1. ease of learning to read with a consistent grapheme - phoneme relationship.

2. ease of reading with upper and lower case letters having no difference in shape and configuration.

3. ease of learning to read with high transfer value of graphemes/phonemes mastered previously and applied in new situations.

4. ease of learning to read with no differences in spelling between and among homonyms.

5. ease of learning to read with unique symbols in matching graphemes and phonemes rather than selected symbols contained in traditional orthography.

The writer does not recommend a special alphabet system in teaching reading. An eventual transfer to TO makes the Initial Teaching Alphabet, and other special alphabet systems, of no value and use.

Philosophy of Basal Reader Approach

Basal readers, no doubt, emphasize the most frequent approach utilized in the teaching of reading. Basals are graded so that each grade level of instruction has a specially designed and written textbook. The textbooks are written by specialists in reading instruction and are published by leading publishing companies.

Manuals accompanying basal readers contain suggestions for teaching reading to pupils. Thus objectives, learning activities, and appraisal procedures directly related to each story in the basal reader are contained in the manual section.

Basal readers emphasize

1. sequential stories/poems selected by the writers which are to interest pupils.

2. ordered skills in reading such as phonics, syllabication, structural analysis, and use of context clues to aid in word recognition and identification.

3. different comprehension skills such as reading to skim or scan, follow directions, develop generalizations, secure facts, appraise content, achieve novel ideas, as well as gather main ideas.

4. methods in the manual section to develop readiness for reading.

5. division of pupils into small homogeneous grouops within a classroom to assist in developing increased learner achievement.

The writer recommends teaching word recognition and comprehension skills when needed to individual pupils. However, the teaching of these skills should not become an end in and of itself. Word recognition and comprehension skills taught are a means to an end and that end being to develop increased pupil proficiency in reading.

In Closing

Teachers need to analyze each philosophy of reading instruction. Philosophies utilized should guide optimal pupil achievement. A philosophy of phoneme/grapheme relationships should be emphasized as needed to guide learners to identify unknown words. A patterns philosophy should be emphasized for learners who might benefit from

structure and order in studying words, sentences, and paragraphs. A library books philosophy should be utilized where learners desire holism and benefit from reading entire stories and poems. Here, analyization is kept to a minimum such as a study of phonics or patterns of words and sentences. Diacritical marking systems philosophies may be emphasized in initial reading instruction for those who need guidance to deal with irregular spelling of words such as irregularity in silent letters, combinations of letters making a single sound, and/or long vowel sounds. The diacritical markings should be eliminated as soon as possible. The writer does not recommend utilizing special alphabet systems, such as ITA, in teaching reading. Basal readers should not be utilized to teach all students in reading. They should be used to provide for the needs and interests of individual pupils.

Reading programs used and emphasized should assist individual pupils to achieve meaning, interest, and purpose in the curriculum. Reading in the curriculum and the societal arena should not be separate, but rather integrated entities. Thus a holistic approach in teaching reading would emphasize reading for understanding and meaning in the school setting as well as in society.